

कक्षा/CLASS: XI

अधिकतम. अंक/ MAX MARKS: 80

समय/TIME : 3 Hrs./घंटे

विषय/SUB: English Core (301)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- The Question paper is divided into three sections:
Section A: Reading (26 – marks)
Section B: Grammar and Creative Writing Skills 23 marks (23 – marks)
Section C: Literature (31 marks)
- All questions are compulsory.
- You may attempt any section at a time.

SECTION A (26 marks)

READING SECTION

Q1. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow: [10]

The Guardian of the Peninsula

The Western Ghats, a chain of mountains running parallel to India's western coast, are much more than a mere geographical feature. They are the water tower of Peninsular India, the source of numerous east and west-flowing rivers that sustain millions. These hills are also home to a staggering variety of life, much of it found nowhere else on Earth. However, the Western Ghats are not just a "wilderness" to be protected by fences; they are a living landscape where humans and nature have co-existed for millennia.

Historically, the people of the Ghats practiced a form of "conservation from below." This is best exemplified by the tradition of 'Sacred Groves'—patches of forest dedicated to local deities where all forms of extraction were strictly prohibited. These groves served as vital refugia for biodiversity and helped maintain local water cycles. This traditional system was rooted in a deep understanding of ecological limits and a social contract that prioritized the long-term health of the environment over short-term individual gain.

In the modern era, this delicate balance is under severe threat. The hills are being increasingly fragmented by mining, large-scale dams, and unplanned infrastructure. We often treat these mountains as a "resource" to be extracted rather than a "life-support system" to be nurtured. The current model of development frequently ignores the "carrying capacity" of the land—the maximum population and activity an ecosystem can support without permanent damage.

To save the Ghats, we must move away from a top-down bureaucratic approach. True conservation requires empowering local communities through democratic institutions like *Gram Sabhas*. Science must partner with local knowledge to create a model of development that is both ecologically sensitive and socially just. We must

recognize that protecting the ecology of the Western Ghats is not an obstacle to development; it is the only way to ensure that development remains sustainable for future generations.

Source: Adapted from the writings of MadhavGadgil, one of India's most respected scientists. He was a pioneer who believed that "real science" shouldn't just happen in laboratories, but should listen to the wisdom of farmers, fishers, and forest-dwellers. His most famous work, the Gadgil Report, warned that neglecting the ecology of the Western Ghats would lead to natural disasters—a prediction that unfortunately came true during the massive floods in South India over the last decade.

1.1 Why does the author refer to the Western Ghats as the "water tower of Peninsular India"?

- (a) Because they are the highest mountains in the country.
- (b) Because they contain man-made reservoirs for urban cities.
- (c) Because they are the source of major rivers that sustain the region.
- (d) Because they receive the highest rainfall in the world.

1.2. Complete the following sentence with a word/phrase from the passage.

The tradition of _____ is an example of "conservation from below," where local communities protected forests through religious and social norms.

1.3. Choose the correct option:

Assertion (A): The author advocates for a "bottom-up" approach to environmental conservation.

Reason (R): Bureaucratic, top-down methods have often failed to involve the local communities who understand the land best.

- (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- (c) A is true but R is false.
- (d) A is false but R is true.

1.4. State whether the following statement is True or False:

According to the passage, the Western Ghats should be treated primarily as a resource for mining and industrial extraction to ensure progress.

1.5. Imagine a village near a forest in the Western Ghats is offered a large sum of money by a private company to set up a stone quarry. Based on Gadgil's views on "carrying capacity" and "social contracts," what would be the most "ecologically sensitive" way for the Gram Sabha to respond?

- (a) Accept the offer immediately as it brings rapid financial surplus and infrastructure to the village.
- (b) Reject the offer and instead ask the government to build a large dam to provide more water for the quarry.

(c) Hold a community meeting to assess if the quarry would damage local water sources and whether the land can sustain such extraction without permanent harm.

(d) Hand over the decision-making power to the private company's scientists, as they have more advanced technology than the local people.

1.6. What does the author imply by the term "carrying capacity" in the third paragraph?

- (a) The total weight of minerals that can be mined from the mountains.
- (b) The number of tourists the Western Ghats can accommodate in a year.
- (c) The limit to which an ecosystem can sustain human activity without being destroyed.
- (d) The volume of water held by the dams in the region.

1.7. Which phrase in the first paragraph suggests that the Western Ghats have a unique biological value?

1.8. Based on the final paragraph, what is the author's vision for "sustainable development"?

- (a) A model where science ignores local traditions to prioritize technology.
- (b) A model where ecology and social justice are integrated with development.
- (c) A model where all human activity is banned in the Western Ghats.
- (d) A model where the government makes all decisions without local consultation.

Q2. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:-8 marks

The Great Screen Shift

The Indian Media and Entertainment (M&E) sector has entered a "hybrid boom." By 2025, digital media surpassed television as the largest segment, contributing 32% of total revenues. This surge in Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms is driven by deep internet penetration in Tier II and III cities and a massive 910-million-strong millennial and Gen Z population.

Statistics reveal that the Indian OTT audience reached 601 million viewers in 2025. While subscription models (SVOD) are popular in metros, the Ad-supported (AVOD) model is the game-changer in price-sensitive markets, capturing 38% of the viewership. On average, an Indian user now spends 180 minutes daily on streaming platforms.

However, the "death of cinema" proved to be a premature prediction. Theatres have found a second wind by positioning themselves as "event destinations." High-spectacle films and IMAX experiences draw massive crowds, whereas mid-budget dramas often face the consumer sentiment: "I'll just watch it on OTT." To adapt, cinema owners have introduced a tiered pricing strategy: lower costs for re-releases (avg. ₹150) compared to new blockbusters (avg. ₹250+), helping recover footfalls by 20%.

Source: Data adapted from FICCI-EY Media & Entertainment Report (2025), Ormax Media OTT Audience Sizing Study, and The Multiplex Association of India (MAI) Industry Bulletins.

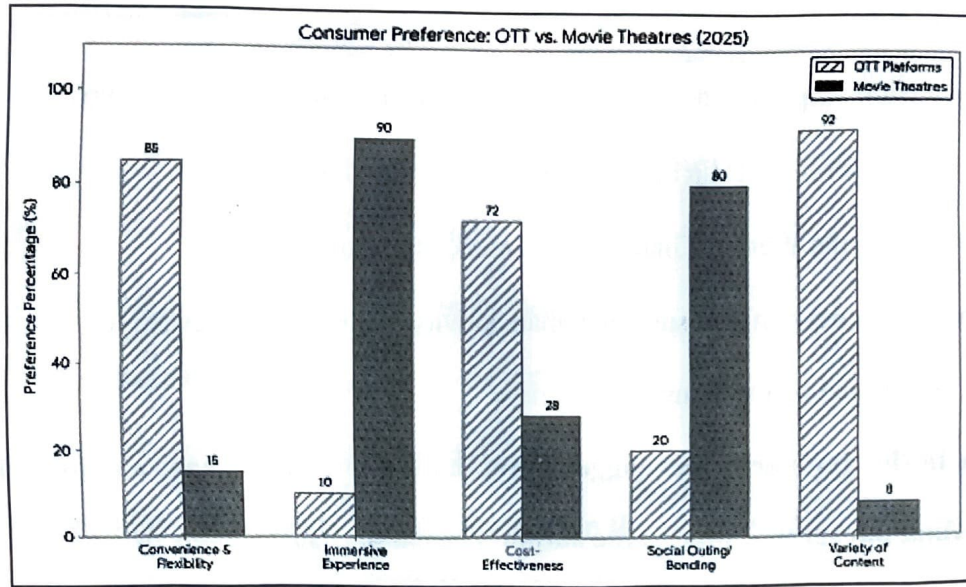


Figure: 1

2.i. Infer two possible ways that the data on consumer preferences, mentioned in paragraph 3 and Figure 1, could be beneficial to multiplex owners. Answer in about 40 words. (2 marks)

2.ii. Which preference point of the survey would influence streaming platforms (OTT) to incorporate social viewing features like 'Watch Parties' or 'Live Comments'? (1 mark)

- A. Convenience & Flexibility
- B. Variety of Content
- C. Social Outing / Bonding
- D. Immersive Experience

2.iii. What do the top choices in the survey for OTT platforms suggest about the lifestyle of modern young adults? (1 mark)

2.iv. Identify the "Cinema Enthusiast" from the following three consumers: (1 mark)

- A. **Aarav:** I prefer watching movies where I can pause and resume whenever I want.
- B. **Sana:** I only go to the hall for the Dolby Atmos sound and the massive screen impact.
- C. **Ishaan:** I like watching movies on my phone during my long metro commute.

2.v. Which of the following is an example of an "event destination" experience, as mentioned in paragraph 3? (1 mark)

- A. Buying a monthly subscription to a streaming app.
- B. Watching a 3-hour long documentary on a tablet.
- C. Attending a midnight IMAX screening of a global blockbuster.
- D. Browsing a library of 10,000 films from home.

2.vi. Complete the sentence appropriately. (1 mark)

The high percentage of users favoring OTT for 'Variety of Content' (92%) compared to theatres (8%) is likely due to _____.

2.vii. State TRUE or FALSE. (1 mark)

The title, "**The Digital Screen: A Zero-Sum Game for Indian Cinema**", is an appropriate title for this passage.

2.viii. Based on the data in Figure 1, the contrast between the preference for 'Variety of Content' (92% for OTT) and 'Immersive Experience' (90% for Theatres) suggests that: (1 mark)

- A. Consumers are confused about which platform provides better entertainment.
- B. Modern audiences value digital platforms for the *breadth* of choice but reserve theatres for the *quality* of the viewing event.
- C. Theatrical viewing is becoming obsolete because it lacks the variety offered by digital libraries.
- D. High-spectacle films are no longer effective in drawing audiences to cinema halls.

Q3. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:-

8 marks

It is a well-established fact among the youth that aunts, as a species, are a formidable force of nature. To the casual observer, an aunt is merely a relative who occasionally sends a sweater of questionable color. However, to the nephew in the trenches, she possesses an eye that can pierce through solid brick and a voice capable of shattering a tea-cup at forty paces. My Aunt Agatha, for instance, is a woman who kills rats with her teeth and views a nephew's life not as a private journey, but as a project in urgent need of a complete structural overhaul.

Primary conflict usually arises over "Standards of Excellence." An aunt's moral bar is set somewhere near the stratosphere. Should you wear a tie with a hint of personality, she will descend with the precision of a hawk. It is her firm belief that any young man not currently engaged in soul-crushing labor is "loafing"—a crime she considers on par with high treason.

Yet, there is genius in their madness. Their unrelenting pressure forces a young man to develop the survival skills of a secret agent. One masters the "strategic exit" through kitchen doors and the "blank expression" during lectures on the virtues of early rising. Dealing with an aunt is the ultimate training; once you have successfully

navigated a Sunday luncheon with a determined relative, the rest of the world's challenges seem like a pleasant stroll in the park.

Source: P.G. Wodehouse, *Jeeves and Wooster* series.

- i. On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, make notes on it using headings and sub-headings. Use recognizable **abbreviations (minimum four)** wherever necessary and choose a format you consider suitable. Also supply an appropriate **title** to it. (5 marks)
- ii. Write a summary of the passage in about **50 words**. (3 marks)

SECTION: B GRAMMAR AND CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (23 marks)

GRAMMAR (7 marks)

Q4. Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct options from those given below.

(4 Marks)

Indian classical music (i) on the complex systems of Raga and Tala. Unlike Western music, it (ii) primarily on improvisation and the performer's creativity. If a student (iii) to master a particular instrument, years of dedicated riyaz (practice) are required. This ancient art form, which (iv) through the Guru-Shishya tradition, remains a vital part of our cultural fabric.

Options:

- (i) (a) base (b) is based (c) was based (d) basing
- (ii) (a) rely (b) relies (c) relied (d) has relied
- (iii) (a) wish (b) wishes (c) wishing (d) wished
- (iv) (a) preserve (b) has been preserved (c) is preserving (d) was preserve

Q5. Read the sentences. Choose the correct option according to the directions given in brackets. ATTEMPT ANY THREE. [1X3=3 marks]

- i. The committee rejected the proposal without any explanation. **(End with: ...by the committee)**
- ii. The artist painted the mural with incredible precision. **(Begin with: With incredible...)**
- iii. The students worked through the night on the project. It was meant for the national science fair. **(Combine using a subordinating conjunction)**
- iv. *that/the/convinced/she/was/opportunity/the/right/was/this/her/for.* **(Rearrange the words to form a meaningful sentence)**

CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS (16 marks)

Q6. Attempt ANY ONE of the two in 50 words.

(3 marks)

A. You are Zico/Zinia, a postgraduate in Mass Communication with three years of experience in freelance journalism. You have a deep interest in Indian folk art and a portfolio of published articles in national dailies. You are now seeking a full-time position as a **Feature Writer or Content Editor** with a reputed media house. Draft a **suitable advertisement** in the **SITUATION WANTED** column of a newspaper in **not more than 50 words**. Give relevant details.

OR

B. You are the Director of the 'Heritage Conservation Society of India', a premier NGO dedicated to restoring ancient monuments. You are seeking a dedicated 'Project Coordinator' with a background in History or Archaeology to oversee a restoration project in Rajasthan. Draft an advertisement in not more than 50 words to be published in the SITUATION VACANT column of a local daily, inviting applications from eligible candidates.

(3 marks)

Q7. Attempt ANY ONE of the two in 50 words.

A. In an era of increasing digital transactions and online interactions, your school is organizing a "Cyber Security Awareness Week" to teach students about protecting personal data, identifying phishing scams, and practicing digital hygiene. Draft a creative and informative poster in about 50 words to be displayed at the school entrance to encourage participation. Include a catchy slogan and essential workshop details.

OR

B. To promote the spirit of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India), the Skill Development Club of your district is launching a weekend workshop on "Sustainable Upcycling"—turning household waste into marketable products. As the Student Coordinator, prepare a poster in not more than 50 words to be displayed in local community centers, highlighting the importance of creative skills and environmental responsibility.

Q8. Attempt ANY ONE of the two in 120-150 words. (5 marks)

A. Recent data from the Youth Wellness Foundation indicates that the "Fear Of Missing Out" (FOMO) is leading to heightened anxiety and sleep deprivation among Indian teenagers. As the Student Representative of the Wellness Club, draft a speech in 120-150 words to be delivered in the morning assembly on the topic, "The Art of Unplugging: Overcoming FOMO."

You may include points like:

- Constant comparison on social media platforms.
- Prioritizing real-life connections over "likes."
- Setting digital boundaries for mental peace.
- Finding joy in "JOMO" (Joy Of Missing Out).

B. In an increasingly globalized world, many young Indians are losing touch with their native mother tongues, preferring English for both formal and informal communication. As Rachel/Ross, a member of the Cultural Heritage Society, draft a speech in 120-150 words to be delivered on International Mother Language Day. Highlight the importance of "Multilingualism: Celebrating our Linguistic Roots."

You may include points like:

- The risk of local idioms and folklore fading away.
- Mother tongue as the primary window to one's culture.
- Benefits of being bilingual/multilingual for cognitive growth.
- Simple steps to practice and promote one's native language.

9. Attempt ANY ONE of the two in 120-150 words.

(5 marks)

A. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (like ChatGPT) in classrooms has sparked a global debate. While some see it as a revolutionary tool for personalized learning, others fear it will lead to the death of critical

thinking and academic integrity. Write a debate either **FOR** or **AGAINST** the motion: "**Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom: A Boon for Future Generations.**" You may include arguments such as:

* **For the motion:** Personalized tutoring, 24/7 accessibility, assistance for specially-abled students, efficiency in research.

* **Against the motion:** Encourages plagiarism, loss of analytical skills, reduction in human-teacher interaction, data privacy concerns.

OR

B. More Indian students are now considering a "Gap Year" after Class XII to focus on skill-building, internships, or travel before entering university, a concept previously common only in the West. Write a debate either **FOR** or **AGAINST** the motion: "**A Gap Year after Schooling is Essential for Career Clarity.**" You may include arguments such as:

- **For the motion:** Prevents academic burnout, allows time for self-discovery, builds practical work experience, improves maturity.
- **Against the motion:** Loss of academic momentum, social pressure of "falling behind," financial burden on parents, lack of structured guidance.

SECTION-C LITERATURE & SUPPLEMENTARY READING TEXT (31MARKS)

Q10. Read the following extracts and answer ANY ONE out of two:

(3x1=3marks)

A. Rather than see him make and move

His world. I would forgive him too,

Shaping from sorrow a new love.

Father and son, we both must live

On the same globe and the same land

i) Why was the father ready to forgive him?

- a) to let go of all the sorrows he had inside
- b) to become a better person
- c) to teach his son a lesson
- d) to help his son

ii) Which of the following has the same literary device as in, "water water everywhere."

- a) father and son we both must live
- b) rather than see him
- c) shaping from sorrow a new love
- d) same globe and the same land

iii) On which condition and hope, the father is ready to forgive the son?

OR

B. "*Then with eerie delicate whistle-chirrup whisperings*

She launches away, towards the infinite and

the laburnum subsides to empty.”

i) Which word is the antonym of ‘shout’?

- a) eerie
- b) whisperings
- c) subsides
- d) delicate

ii) ‘whistle-chirrup whispering’ has following literary devices:

1) Alliteration 2) Oxymoron 3) Synecdoche 4) Onomatopoeia

- a) 1&4
- b) 1&3
- c) 2&4
- d) 1&2

iii) Why does ‘she’ launch away?

Q11. Read the following extracts and answer ANY ONE out of two:

(3x1=3 marks)

A. *“After finding a hammer, screws and canvas, I struggled back on the deck. With the starboard side bashed open, we were taking water with each wave that broke over us. If I couldn’t make some repairs, we would surely sink. Somehow, I managed to stretch canvas and secure waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes”.*

i) The statement “we were taking water with each wave” refers to:

- a) they were choked by the water
- b) they were drawing water from the sea
- c) the Wavewalker was flooded with water with each wave
- d) they were about to sink

ii) What repair work was done by him?

iii) ‘Gaping holes on the deck’ refers to

OR

B. *“Don’t smile smugly. In case you think that it was just my mind playing tricks and my imagination running amok, look at this.” And, triumphantly, Professor Gaitonde produced his vital piece of evidence: a page torn out of a book. Rajendra read the text on the printed page and his face underwent a change. Gone was the smile and in its place came a grave expression. He was visibly moved. Gangadhar pant pressed home his advantage.*

i) Which of the following emoticons resemble the word ‘smugly’?



ii) The ‘vital evidence’ was from which book:

- a) DadasahebanchiBakhar
- b) MadhavraoanchiBakhar

- c) BausahebanchiBakhar
- d) VishwasraoanchiBakhar

iii) RajendraDeshpande's face underwent a change because_____.

Q12. Read the following extract and answer ANY ONE out of two:

(4x1=4 marks)

A. 'O King, it was the workmen's fault'

'Oh!' said the King, and called a halt

To the proceedings. Being just (And placider now)

he said, 'I must Have all the workmen hanged instead.'

The workmen looked surprised, and said,

'O King, you do not realize

The bricks were made of the wrong size.'

'Summon the masons!' said the King.

The masons stood there quivering.

'It was the architect...', they said,

The architect was summoned.

i) What does the word 'quivering' mean in the extract?

- a) The act of vibrating due to fear
- b) The act of vibrating due to cold
- c) The act of vibrating due to lack of confidence
- d) The act of vibrating due to sudden love

ii) To whom did the masons pass the blame?

- a) Workmen
- b) Architect
- c) Chief of Builders
- d) Himself

iii) What does the word 'proceedings' refer to in the above extract?

iv) What was the consequence of the wrong size of the brick?

- a) The thoroughfare was blocked.
- b) The arch was slanting
- c) The king's crown was broken
- d) The arch was too low

OR

B. *"And what should I have done with them in a small rented room where the shreds of black-out paper still hung along the windows and no more than a handful of cutleries fitted in the narrow table drawer? I resolved to forget the address. Of all the things I had to forget, that would be the easiest."*

i) The word 'them' stands for

- a. friends
- b. shred of black-out paper
- c. feelings
- d. the belongings

ii) Assertion (A): The narrator decides to forget the address because she realizes the past is beyond retrieval.

Reason (R): Her encounter with the woman and the things at the address makes her understand that the things she once valued no longer have significance for her.

- a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.

c) A is true, but R is false.

d) A is false, but R is true

iii) Find a word from the extract opposite to 'abundance'

iv) What is the significance of the "shreds of black-out paper" still hanging along the windows in the narrator's room?

a) They symbolize the lasting effects of war and the narrator's inability to fully move on from the past.

b) They represent the narrator's desire to remember the past and keep it alive.

c) They indicate that the narrator's new home is still in disrepair.

d) They are a symbol of the narrator's hope to restore the world to how it was before the war.

Q13. Answer any TWO of the following questions in about 40 -50 words.

(3x2=6 marks)

a) In *The Portrait of a Lady*, Khushwant Singh mentions that his grandmother's stories of her childhood games seemed "quite absurd and undignified" to him. Why did he treat these accounts as "fables" rather than facts?

b) In the poem *The Voice of the Rain*, the rain claims to rise "impalpable" out of the land and the bottomless sea. Explain the significance of this word in the context of the rain's eternal journey.

c) Why does the text *Discovering Tut: The Saga Continues* describe Akhenaten's transition as one of the strangest periods in the history of ancient Egypt? (Focus on his actions regarding the god Amun).

d) In the poem *Childhood*, the poet concludes that Hell and Heaven "could not be in geography." How does this realization help him identify the exact moment he lost his innocence?

Q14. Answer any ONE of the following questions in 40-50 words.

(3x1=3 marks)

a) While Aram was a quiet observer, Mourad was considered one of the "craziest" members of the tribe. Describe their first joint ride on the beautiful white horse.

b) In the play *Mother's Day*, Mrs. Fitzgerald (in Mrs. Pearson's body) successfully intimidates the family. However, even she made mistakes. Identify the two "slips" or moments where her real identity was almost revealed.

Q15. Answer any ONE of the following questions in 120-150 words.

(1x6=6marks)

A. Imagine you are **Norbu** from *Silk Road*. You are an academic who wants to do the Kora, but you are worried because you are "not a believer" in the traditional sense and your "stout" physical build makes the climb look impossible. After meeting Nick Middleton at the Darchen café, you feel a sense of relief. **Write a Diary Entry reflecting on this meeting.** Discuss why you felt like an "outsider" in Darchen and how finding a fellow "academic" companion changed your outlook on the difficult journey ahead.

You may begin like this: "Dear Diary, Today in this desolate town of Darchen, I finally found a reason to hope..."

OR

B. Both Khushwant Singh's *The Portrait of a Lady* and Shirley Toulson's poem *A Photograph* deal with the memory of a loved one who is no longer there. While the grandmother is a "vital presence" in the house and the mother in the photo is a "happy memory" of the beach, both stories end in a deep, painful **silence**. How do the authors show that even when a person stops speaking or is gone, their memory continues to tell a story? Compare the grandmother's quiet prayers

with the "silence" that the poet feels while looking at the old photograph. **Analyze how "silence" acts as a character in both these texts.**

Q16. Answer any ONE of the following questions in 120-150 words.

(1x6=6 marks)

A. In *The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse*, John Byro chooses to believe the "honesty of the Garoghlanian tribe" over the evidence provided by his own eyes. Evaluate how this specific incident of "generous silence" acted as a catalyst for the boys' decision to return the horse. Did Byro's refusal to accuse them create a "psychological debt" that made it impossible for the boys to continue their "borrowing"? Discuss with reference to the theme of **Integrity as a Social Shield**.

OR

B. In *The Address*, the narrator eventually realizes that the "silver" and "antique" items she once craved are now just "ghosts" living in a stranger's house. During her second visit, she decides that some memories are too heavy to carry into the future. **Analyze the "power of the present" over the "pull of the past" in this story.** Was her decision to "forget the address" an admission that the past is a "foreign country" we can never truly re-visit?
